

The University of Chicago

**WESTERN BAPTISTS IN THE AGE
OF BIG BUSINESS**

A PART OF THE DISSERTATION SUBMITTED
TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY IN CANDIDACY
FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

DEPARTMENT OF CHURCH HISTORY

By
ROY HAROLD JOHNSON

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AMERICAN BAPTISTS IN THE AGE OF BIG BUSINESS

ROY HAROLD JOHNSON
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THE latter half of the nineteenth century was marked by the remarkable growth of business enterprise in the United States. A very significant change was taking place in industry in that individual proprietors were being replaced by large factories managed by corporate boards. Before the Civil War there were fifty telegraph companies and 450 operators of coal mines, while the New England cotton mills were in the hands of powerful families.¹ When the era of big business really set in, about the beginning of the seventies, it presaged the end of the individual small manufacturer in any large numbers and made impossible the old system of personal relations between employer and employee. The corporations that bought out the independent operators were in turn merged into trusts.

The development of big business was accompanied by an emphasis on efficiency, system, and organization, involving a delegation of responsibility to committees and boards. The tremendous profits entailed and the prestige accorded the successful attracted the best of the nation's talent. The American business man was idolized, and, more than the politician, he was looked upon as the maker and symbol of modern America.

The Baptist response to the centralization of economic interests and the emphasis on efficiency showed in several new trends of development. There was a demand for the efficient administration of the entire denominational program, local, state, and national. Business men were appointed to important executive positions of the national societies of Baptists, and the

¹ B. J. Hendrick, *The Age of Big Business*, pp. 5-7.

administration of the community and local church programs was taken over by laymen. There came to be a definite dependence on large individual gifts for benevolent purposes, and a consolidation of denominational societies and educational institutions was effected in the interests of efficiency. Expenditures for benevolent purposes showed a direct relationship to general financial conditions.

In 1869 the Executive Board of the Home Mission Society adopted a code of principles that revealed an appreciation of the requirements of the new day:

In carrying forward the work of the Society, it is the aim of your Board:

1. To practice such scrupulous economy in every department of the service as is to be found consistent with the highest efficiency.
2. To occupy fields of the very best promise, centers of influence, centers of power; and from these to move aggressively outward, as from a well-assumed military base.
3. To spend none of the money of the society upon a man simply because he is poor or because he applies for aid, but to employ as laborers, men of known industry, piety, energy, and efficiency. Missionary money is very sacred. It should be made to yield the largest returns possible.
4. To insist that the pastors and churches aided, shall not merely strive to become self-supporting as soon as possible, but from the very first and always to be contributing churches; on the ground that only such churches are of the New Testament type.
5. To strike for the best lot in town where a meeting house is to be built: and never to encourage extravagance in building, but on the contrary, economy, commodiousness, durability, and taste.
6. In making loans from the edifice fund, to encourage churches to borrow in as small sums as possible, and to free themselves from debt at the earliest possible opportunity.²

The work of the Home Mission Society was systematized in all departments. District secretaries were appointed and a plan of co-operation worked out with the state associations whereby the Society pledged to each state, through the home mission board of that state, a definite sum, conditioned upon

² *Proceedings of the American Baptist Home Mission Society* (1869), p. 19.

the raising and expenditure upon the field of another specified amount.³

Baptist business acumen was demonstrated in the solicitation and administration of the Church Edifice Fund, whereby money was to be loaned without interest to struggling western churches to enable them to avoid commercial charges of 25 per cent and more. A campaign to raise \$500,000 for this purpose was begun in 1866 and an architect hired to draw plans for standardized churches that could be erected at a minimum cost to meet the needs of each community.⁴ The directors pointed with pride to the fact that they had "been enabled to take advantage of special providence to secure, in a growing city or town, church edifices already built by other denominations at nearly one-half their original cost."⁵ Gradually the practice of loaning money was abandoned, and, under a Benevolent Fund, outright gifts were made to needy churches. Such churches were bound, under the terms of an ironclad mortgage, to revert to the Home Mission Society in case the congregation should disband, for Baptist leaders had no intention of allowing other denominations to utilize property that had been endowed by a Baptist agency.⁶

In their attitude toward Christian benevolence, Baptists displayed an eagerness to meet the standards of the new age. The need for systematic giving was stressed in the press, at conventions, in the pulpit, and lectures on the methodology of Christian beneficence were given at the leading seminaries.⁷ As early as 1869, the Committee on Finance of the American Baptist Missionary Union characterized the current methods

³ J. A. Smith, *History of Baptists in the Western States East of the Mississippi*, pp. 198, 199.

⁴ L. Moss, *Baptists and the National Centenary*, pp. 174, 183.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ H. L. Morehouse, *Baptist Home Missions in America*, p. 171.

⁷ "Chicago: Morgan Park," *Standard*, December 27, 1877. Dr. Cheney delivered the second of his previously announced lectures on the "Development of Church Beneficence" in the seminary chapel.

of raising funds as hopelessly inadequate, for "the necessity of the hour" was a system that would "reach every church in the working field of the Union at home and abroad."⁸ It was further recommended that the Executive Committee appoint a committee of five for each state to organize missionary meetings, inspire enthusiasm, and thus form "the connecting link between the churches in those states and the rooms in Boston."

A detailed report of the progress that had been made in educating the denomination to practice systematic beneficence was made to the Home Mission Society in 1877. At that time nearly every church had adopted the "New Testament plan" of weekly giving to meet current and local expenses, the envelope system being widely used. The denominational press was commended for lending its aid to the crusade for systematic giving, and it was announced that several hundred manuscripts had been sent to the Publication Society to compete for a \$100 prize for the best essay on the subject.⁹

In 1884 the Home Mission Society appointed a standing committee on systematic benevolence, and several co-operating state organizations took similar action, but it was not until 1896 that a system of national organization, in which all Baptist interests and organizations could have a share, was perfected. The key to the new plan was proportional representation; at the head was a Commission on Systematic Christian Beneficence composed of the representatives of the national societies of Baptists.¹⁰ Newly formed state, district association, and local church commissions were made responsible to the national commission, and standing committees on organi-

⁸ *Proceedings* (1869), pp. 13, 14.

⁹ *Proceedings* (1877), p. 12.

¹⁰ A general secretary and two others elected by each of the following organizations: American Baptist Missionary Union, American Baptist Home Mission Society, American Baptist Publication Society, American Baptist Education Society, Baptist Young People's Union of America, together with the corresponding secretaries of the Woman's Baptist Foreign Mission Society, Woman's Baptist Foreign Mission Society of the West, Woman's Baptist Home Mission Society, and Woman's American Baptist Home Mission Society.

zation, statistics and literature, plans of giving, and public meetings, and conferences appointed.¹¹

Throughout the period there was pressure exerted to apply business methods to the conduct of local church affairs. At the Illinois Christian Convention in 1868, an annual interdenominational gathering at Bloomington, "the great subject of discussion and chief object of prayer was not Christian union but Christian efficiency."¹² Among the more prominent means discussed were children's meetings, systematic visitation, lay preaching, mission Sabbath schools, and general Christian co-operation. The trend toward the delegation of authority gripped the local churches. Business transactions were now carefully worked over by committees, and even applicants for church membership presented themselves to a committee instead of appearing in person before a general church meeting. According to a leading clergyman, the well-organized Baptist church in 1871 had the following twelve departments: the sick and relief of the needy, spiritual affairs and candidates, baptism, Sunday school, tracts and publications, women's devotional meetings, attending to strangers, church and society sociables, music, temperance, church building and property, and finance.¹³ The complaint was voiced in 1875 that church business meetings were too complex, and it was urged that all the detail work be done in committees and only the results submitted to open and general meetings.¹⁴

W. W. Everts, in 1887, charged that business meetings were taking precedence over prayer meetings, and that government by committees completely dominated local church life.¹⁵ He cited a number of examples of modern business methodology applied to the local church: a Baptist church in Boston had a budget and pledge card system; in New York the every-mem-

¹¹ "Systematic Benevolence," *Standard*, August 22, 1896.

¹² "Illinois Christian Convention," *ibid.*, October 29, 1868.

¹³ *Ibid.*, July 27, 1871.

¹⁴ "Church Business Meetings," *ibid.*, May 27, 1875.

¹⁵ *Baptist Layman's Book*, pp. 95 ff.

ber canvass was in vogue; a New Jersey church circularized its members for important causes; in Connecticut it was the custom to obtain subscriptions for benevolences through notes given at the beginning of the year and involving monthly payments to a treasurer. Professor J. H. Gilmore wrote an article on "Presbyterian Tendencies in Our Baptist Churches." He endeavored to show that committees took care of church business so completely that there was nothing left for the congregational meeting. A correspondent from Cincinnati stated in 1867 that if the Baptist denomination ever died in that city it would be from excess of constitution. There were as many "young people's associations, sewing societies, ladies missionary organizations, organized Bible classes, etc.," as there were "warts on a toad's back." In addition Baptists assembled once a month and formed a society composed of members from all the churches.¹⁶

The office of deacon in a Baptist church has greatly changed owing to the pressure to secure men with business ability to serve as church officials. According to New Testament usage, Baptist deacons have always been superintendents of the secular concerns of the church. In the Colonial and early national periods of the nation's history deacons were elected for a lifetime and were inducted to office by ordination and assigned special seats in the church.¹⁷ In conformity to business efficiency and the trend toward the secularization of church offices, the deaconate has been made elective and the incumbents laymen. J. M. Pendleton deplored the modern tendency to regard the deacon as a mere clerk or trustee subject to annual election, so that of one church it could be said "nearly every male member in it has at some time acted as a deacon."¹⁸ It became the practice to hold stated elections of deacons "in growing communities to make sure of the best gifts."¹⁹

¹⁶ "Concerning a Certain Cincinnati Peculiarity," *Standard*, August 1, 1867.

¹⁷ Quirof Harlan, *Changing Customs among American Baptists*, pp. 6-7.

¹⁸ *Church Manual*, p. 35.

¹⁹ W. W. Everts, *op. cit.*, p. 101.

As has already been indicated, laymen assumed further responsibilities and greater authority in Baptist affairs during the period under consideration. In 1860 the Church Edifice Fund Committee expressed the opinion that "the advice given by a man of skill and experience, or a committee of judicious men of business talent and habit, would be worth more to the needy church than a large gift of money without such advice."²⁰ A few years later the Missouri Baptist State Convention reported it as a fact "full of promise" that almost the entire slate of officers and the Executive Committee were laymen engaged in business.²¹ Baptist business men of Iowa held a state convention in 1873 to energize lay workers,²² and B. F. Jacobs, a Chicago business man and a Baptist, systematized the Sunday-school work of the churches on a national scale following 1867.²³ A man who had made an outstanding success of some business enterprise was often asked to perform his duty to the denomination by acting as treasurer of one of the national societies of Baptists. When the Home Mission Society was faced with an alarming deficit in 1885, a committee of seven business men was appointed to work out a solution.²⁴ A contributor to the *Standard* stated that 5 per cent of the Baptists, or a total of 75,000, were business men. He urged that they take over the administration of denominational affairs, for who was "so qualified to do business as a business man, and who to spend God's money as his legitimate stewards?"²⁵

Business men began to take a leading part in the development of local church programs. The First Baptist Church of Chicago in 1870 put its extension work in the hands of a mission committee of well-known business men, a practice that was followed in other cities.²⁶ Lay preaching was immensely

²⁰ *Proceedings Home Mission Society* (1860), p. 51.

²¹ "Missouri Convention," *Christian Times and Witness*, October 11, 1866.

²² "Correspondence from Iowa," *Standard*, September 25, 1873.

²³ J. A. Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 249.

²⁴ *Proceedings* (1885), p. 6.

²⁵ "Business Affairs of Christ's Kingdom," *Standard*, March 27, 1873.

²⁶ "Chicago Items," *Standard*, February 2, 1871.

popular during the first decades after the Civil War, and D. L. Moody, president of the Chicago Young Men's Christian Association, occupied leading Baptist pulpits on numerous occasions. Mr. Moody, after an extensive tour of the Christian conventions in 1868, told how "churches that had been closed against laymen were freely thrown open, pastors taking seats with the listeners, and laymen speaking from pulpits and burning hearts, arousing many to vigorous work for souls."²⁷

Laymen's church organizations appeared and grew rapidly in the years following the war, as is exemplified by the Baptist Social unions which were at first confined to the local churches in the larger cities. The movement had its origin in Tremont Temple, Boston, in 1864, and units were soon established in other centers. In October, 1874, the Brooklyn Baptist Social Union voted to issue a call for a convention of delegates from all the Baptist Social unions of the country,²⁸

to be held in Brooklyn December 9 and 10, to take into consideration the place of our laymen in the great denominational movements, their responsibility to the churches, the development of social influence, the education of the ministry, the endowment of our colleges, and the kindred subjects of like interest to the whole denomination.

Reports and addresses delivered at the Brooklyn Convention clearly showed that laymen were determined to have a larger share in the management of denominational enterprises. In his keynote speech, delivered on the opening day of the convention, Martin B. Anderson, president of the University of Rochester, charged the delegates to "bring business common sense to bear upon the professional habits and modes of thought likely to prevail in the clerical body."²⁹ He further urged that the financial administration of the churches, Christian charities, Sunday schools, and denominational education, all be under the control of laymen. An editorial writer for the *Standard* upheld the barring of clergymen from membership

²⁷ *Ibid.*, April 16, 1868.

²⁸ "Educational News and Views," *ibid.*, November 5, 1871.

²⁹ *Convention of Baptist Social Unions* (1874), p. 16.

in the social unions on the ground that lay leadership engendered "a business spirit and method too often lacking when the control" was "wholly or mostly ministerial."³⁰

A successor to the National Social Union was the Baptist Congress, which met annually from 1881 to 1912 and constituted a forum of the ablest minds in the denomination, both clerical and lay. The tremendous momentum generated by the various activities of Christian laymen found expression in the conferences, denominational and interdenominational, that began to be held each summer at such places as Chautauqua, New York, Minnetonka, Minnesota, and Clear Lake, Iowa. Courses of instruction were given for both children and adults; Sunday-school rallies were held, and, in general, the training of lay church workers was stressed.³¹ As the only course open to clergymen was to organize to preserve their professional status, the ministers in the larger cities began to hold Monday morning conferences. About the middle of the century, Baptist pastoral unions appeared and became recognized units of the state conventions. At such gatherings papers were read dealing with the problems of the minister and the technique of his work.³²

As has already been noted, there had come to be a definite dependence on large individual contributions to carry on Baptist extension work. This implied important physical and psychological changes, for it had long been a source of pride to Baptists that they were the poor man's denomination, while the rich, especially in the cities, were Episcopalians and Presbyterians.³³ After the war there was little expression of contempt for wealth. On the contrary, the rich were welcomed, justified, and depended upon for financial aid. The *Christian Times and Witness* announced with pride in 1867 that, al-

³⁰ "Laymen's Social Union," *Standard*, December 28, 1876.

³¹ "Doings at Point Chautauqua," *Standard*, August 22, 1878.

³² Published with the state convention records of each state.

³³ D. D. Jeter, *Madison Avenue Lectures*, p. 375. The progress of Baptist principles has been mainly among the poor of the world.

though the Baptist church in St. Paul was numerically weak, it was financially strong, "the strongest in point of wealth . . . in the city."³⁴ T. G. Jones characterized as unworthy of serious notice the allegation that Baptist churches were composed of the poor of the world:

God has so blessed them [the Baptists], temporally, as well as spiritually, that we could demonstrate that the aggregate of wealth among them is far greater than of some ecclesiastical fraternities, whose members not infrequently put on lordly airs and affect to despise the Baptists for their poverty. But to a task like this we are unwilling to descend.³⁵

The concept of the "sanctification" or justification of wealth that Siegfried has called such a characteristic of American Protestantism began to be stated by Baptist leaders. Rev. William Elgin, of Indianapolis, Indiana, delivered a sermon on "The Christian Idea of Wealth" in 1869, using as his theme the idea that those who gave money to educational institutions "put it into the way of being transformed at once into a living force."³⁶ In the course of a highly laudatory editorial in the *Standard*, the statement was made that the man of wealth was a man of talent.³⁷ Moreover, the various enterprises of benevolence and organization had been benefited to a marked degree by the accession of men of this stamp to their working force, for the man of money stood "side by side with the man of faith." The members of the Indiana Baptist State Convention passed a resolution in 1890 saying that they "thankfully recognized the rich blessing of the Great Head of the Church, in the recent gift of Brother John D. Rockefeller to the Baptist Seminary of Chicago."³⁸ Two years later, in the course of his address at a great educational rally in the Auditorium Theater, Chicago, Dr. Wayland Hoyt made the following statement:

Wealth is concentrated power. . . . What better thing can you do than to join that benignant conspiracy out of which has re-arisen this

³⁴ "Minnesota Towns," October 24, 1867.

³⁵ *The Baptists, A Vindication*, p. 192.

³⁶ *Standard*, September 16, 1869.

³⁷ "Men of Money," April 23, 1868.

³⁸ *Proceedings* (1890), p. 40.

splendid University with that Christian statesman, John D. Rockefeller, at the head [applause], gathering around him the multitudes of other noble men and women who with him are working for that future.³⁹

The institutional program of the Baptists, local, national, and foreign came to be supported mainly through large individual contributions. Although no Baptist churches were destroyed in the Chicago fire of 1871, there was cause for deep lamentation, for in the loss and destruction to "the immense businesses of the city and the consequent cutting off of resources found in the Christian liberality of wealthy and enterprising men," the Baptists "shared fully with the rest."⁴⁰ The *Standard* called attention to the fact that the revenue of the national societies came from "the comparatively few in a limited number of churches."⁴¹ In 1878 Gardner Chilson, a New England manufacturer and merchant, gave the Home Mission Society \$120,000, and, when the Society was badly in debt five years later, it was not because of a lack of contributions from the churches, for these had "actually and greatly increased, but from a lack of some large individual gifts which were naturally expected."⁴² The 1888 report of the Home Mission Society revealed that more than one-half its income was derived from legacies and individual gifts for special objects.⁴³

At the Jubilee Convention in 1882 wealthy Baptist benefactors such as Vassar, Bishop, Colgate, Colby, Deane, Bucknell, Crozer, Trevor, Wycoff, Peddie, Constant, Rockefeller, and Pyle were lauded by speakers and in committee reports. During the course of his report, the chairman of the Committee on Work among the Freedmen stated that, as the Baptists had money in abundance, it was their duty to say so and to keep on saying so. He claimed to be able "to name twelve Baptist brethren, in twelve minutes of time, who could give \$100,000 each to endow . . . twelve schools, and have money enough

³⁹ "Educational Rally at the Auditorium," *Standard*, April 21, 1892.

⁴⁰ "The Lock unto Heaven," *ibid.*, October 26, 1871.

⁴¹ "The Few and the Many," *ibid.*, July 22, 1875.

⁴² *Proceedings* (1883), p. 10.

⁴³ *Ibid.* (1890), p. 18.

left to ruin twelve children for each of them, if they had so many."⁴¹ The Chicago Baptist Social Union made the confident announcement in 1880 that the time was coming when Chicago would have "a Colby, or a Colgate, or a Bishop to lead in progressive benevolent work."⁴²

Wealthy men were elected to the executive boards of the national societies of Baptists in the hope that they would furnish both the necessary funds and the needed executive ability. Rockefeller, during the time that he was on the Executive Board of the Home Mission Society, not only personally paid the Society's standing deficit of \$250,000, but also paid individual workers in needy areas out of his own pocket. Thomas Hoyne resigned as president of the Board of Trustees of the University of Chicago, giving as his reason the fact that he was "not a merchant prince" and urging the selection of a man of wealth as his successor.⁴³ His resignation was accepted.

Local churches were made the objects of benefactions of men of wealth. The Calvary Baptist Church at Washington, D.C., was erected at a cost of \$125,000, of which amount, Amos Kendall, a well-known politician in the days of Jackson and Van Buren, gave \$100,000.⁴⁴ One lay brother in Philadelphia offered to give \$50,000 to the Baptist churches of that city if they would pool their indebtedness.⁴⁵ The Home Mission Board announced that large contributors to the removal of debts resting on churches in New York City and the vicinity had required the churches "to secure the amounts thus given to the Society against the possibility of ultimate loss."⁴⁶

The cause of denominational education benefited greatly through the beneficence of men of wealth. George Peabody, who gave away between six and seven million dollars during

⁴¹ H. L. Morehouse, *op. cit.*, p. 171.

⁴² "The Chicago Social Union," *Standard*, October 21, 1880.

⁴³ "The University of Chicago," *ibid.*, July 16, 1879.

⁴⁴ "Washington Correspondence," *ibid.*, January 2, 1868.

⁴⁵ "Our Philadelphia Letter," *ibid.*, October 30, 1879.

⁴⁶ Morehouse, *op. cit.*, p. 379.

his own lifetime, headed a list of "great givers" compiled by a Baptist publication.⁵⁰ Prominent also were Mathew Vassar, who contributed \$800,000 to found a woman's college, and Ezra Cornell, who gave \$500,000 to found a university. John P. Crozer donated \$230,000 "besides ample buildings, including houses for the professors" to the seminary which bears his name. Madison, Rochester, and Colby universities were indebted to "the messrs. Colgate, John B. Trevor, the late Gardner Colby, James Deane, and messrs. Wyckoff of New York, and others less well known." Then follows this interesting conclusion:

These things are a feature of the times now passing. It is cheering to be permitted to regard them as characteristic: as indicative of the degree in which the great idea has taken hold of wealthy men that the very highest office and privilege of wealth is service . . . an inspiring consciousness of a day to come when the "faithful and wise steward" can meet the master of all, as one at whose feet it will be an infinite joy to lay down the fruits of all his giving and all his doing.

The committee in charge reported to the Home Mission Society that the greater portion of the \$450,000 that had been given for work among the freedmen had come from "generous individuals" whose offerings had been designated for the purpose.⁵¹ The outstanding contributor to Baptist educational interests has been John D. Rockefeller. According to Professor A. H. Newman, the Baptist Education Society was formed in 1888, because of the known desire of Mr. Rockefeller for such an agency to administer the funds he was about to bestow.⁵²

The Baptist program of expansion was directly responsive to the economic status of the nation, for, when times were hard receipts for home and foreign missions fell off and activities had to be curtailed. The steady growth of the Home Mission Society after 1850 was interrupted in 1856-58, 1861-62, 1874-78, and 1894-98 by intervals of retrogression. These

⁵⁰ "The Great Givers," *Standard*, December 30, 1880.

⁵¹ *Proceedings of the Western Baptist Education Commission* (1871), p. 53.

⁵² *History of Baptist Churches in the United States*, p. 477.

dates roughly correspond to the years of financial panic, or retrenchment in commercial development, in the United States. An attempt to ignore the Panic of 1893 by carrying on a full program of work resulted in the Home Mission Society being plunged badly into debt.⁵³ The period from 1873 to 1879 was a particularly trying time to finance Baptist activities, so salaries had to be reduced and a general program of retrenchment adopted.⁵⁴ Even so the Home Mission Society emerged from the period of depression with a heavy debt, from which it was later freed through the kindness of John D. Rockefeller.

However, business adversity brought gains as well as losses to religion, for, during the hard times of 1857-58 and 1873-79, there were great religious revivals that more than compensated for financial losses. The *Christian Times* attributed the renewed interest in religion to the fact that the people had more leisure time, and that "the sad experience of the uncertainty of worldly riches . . . disposed the hearts of many to sigh for the durable riches."⁵⁵ The business men of the country took a prominent part in the revival activities in 1857-58 by participating in the daily noon prayer meetings that were held in the principal cities.⁵⁶ Only a few weeks after the Panic of 1873 broke, the Brooklyn correspondent of the *Standard* wrote that the feeling pervaded the community that "the suffering incident to the present state of affairs" would "lead thousands to turn from the fleeting things of time to the realities of eternity."⁵⁷ The expected religious quickening did not come immediately, but, as the depression in business continued, men turned to religion for solace. The spring and summer of 1874 found the smaller communities of the Middle West in the grip

⁵³ "Our Debt," *Proceedings* (1894), p. 18. "For the first time in eight years we are obliged to report a deficit. Our debt at the close of the fiscal year, March 31, was \$101,456.66. This was occasioned by the financial panic which gives to 1893 the bad pre-eminence of being the worst year in half a century."

⁵⁴ *Ibid.* (1879), p. 43.

⁵⁵ "Revivals," January 27, 1858.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷ "A Word from Brooklyn," *ibid.*, November 27, 1873.

of a revival enthusiasm greater than had ever before been known. Dwight L. Moody, described as the "New Whitefield" who swayed audiences "by dint of direct, plain, earnest, business-like appeal" was remarkably successful in the larger cities.⁵⁸ The success achieved by Moody and other lay workers, such as George H. Stuart, of Philadelphia, William E. Dodge, of New York, and Thomas Miller, of Cincinnati, led a Baptist editor to see "a new and august movement on the part of the captain of our salvation, or rather the reorganization of a primitive branch of his service—the philippine corps of lay evangelists."⁵⁹

As business adversity compelled retrenchment on the part of church agencies, conversely, national prosperity made possible a period of church expansion. The Baptist Association of Southern New York realized this and appointed a special day of prayer in 1877 that the Spirit of God might be poured out on city and country, that business integrity might be restored, and that a recognition of "dependence on God for business prosperity" might be awakened.⁶⁰ The resumption of specie payments, January 1, 1879, was hailed by Baptist leaders as meaning economic stability and increased opportunity, and the Home Mission Society's great progress in 1883 was attributed by the Executive Committee to the "revival in business."⁶¹

In keeping with progress in the business world, there were consolidations and mergers of Baptist organizations, especially in the field of denominational education. During the early period of development in the West, Baptists of each state or section founded academies, colleges, and seminaries without regard to national distribution. The chief agencies of support were city, district, and state education societies; so in 1871 there were twenty independent Baptist education societies in

⁵⁸ "The New Whitefield," *ibid.*, April 1, 1875.

⁵⁹ "Lay Evangelists," *ibid.*, March 25, 1875.

⁶⁰ "The New York Letter," *ibid.*, October 25, 1877.

⁶¹ *Proceedings* (1883), p. 11.

the north. The overlapping of fields and the need for funds to keep pace with the rapid development of public education resulted in a movement for the consolidation of educational units and the providing them with adequate endowment and efficient business administration.

In February, 1867, the representatives of education societies in Illinois, Missouri, and Indiana met at Chicago in an attempt to form one education society for the West. At that meeting the sentiment was voiced that it was a "duty just as sacred as any can be" for those in charge to use the least possible of the denominational money in machinery, and the most possible in the cause for whose benefit it was given.⁶² A year later the American Baptist Educational Commission was formed; it functioned through sectional advisory committees and conventions.⁶³ Although the special field of the Commission was confined to New York and New Jersey, an attempt was made to gather statistics from all Baptist institutions to use as a basis for recommendations for a national educational policy. Another purpose of the Commission was "to serve as a medium of communication between needy institutions of learning, or those engaged in the founding of such institutions, and men of wealth, or others, whose interest it might be thought desirable to enlist in their behalf."⁶⁴

The success of the Educational Commission led to the calling of National Baptist Educational conventions in 1870 and 1872. These conventions attracted delegates from all sections of the country, including the southern states, and strong sentiment was expressed for a permanent education society to have general guidance over the Baptist program. At the first convention Dr. Bright, of New York, ridiculed the old tradition of a "Baptist college in every state," warning his colleagues that, if Baptist institutions were to have adequate endowment and main-

⁶² "One Educational Society for the West," *Standard*, February 21, 1867.

⁶³ S. S. Cutting, *Baptist Educational Commission*, pp. 23-28.

⁶⁴ Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 294.

tain high standards, there must be a unified program. A college and a seminary in every state meant an expenditure of \$50,000,000, and there was just as much reason for expecting to get this amount as there was of "building a railroad to the moon at the expense of the Baptists of the United States."⁶⁵ According to Dr. Lemuel Moss, the Educational Convention of 1870 included a larger proportion of the leading minds among American Baptists than had been found in one assembly for more than a generation.⁶⁶ When, two years later, the "representatives of 18,000 churches and a million and a half of members in communion" were again assembled, one of the ablest addresses was that of Rev. T. G. Jones, of Nashville, Tennessee, on "Limiting the Number of Our Institutions by Our Power To Make Them Strong."⁶⁷ Similar ideas were expressed at the Western Baptist Educational Convention which met at Chicago the previous year, for it was declared to be fundamental to growth and development to encourage concentration of gifts to the largest possible extent.⁶⁸

The first conventions were called and financed by a few men of means who were interested in securing a unified program, and it was not until 1888 that there was a national Baptist educational organization with executive powers that could be respected by the entire denomination. The leading objectives of the American Baptist Education Society, which was founded in that year, were co-operation in the securing of sites, buildings, and equipment, raising endowment funds, the solicitation and holding in trust of funds, the income of which was to be devoted to education, and the compilation and publication annually of the principal facts concerning the condition and progress of educational enterprises of Baptists in North America.⁶⁹ The Baptist Educational Union was formed in 1896. The pur-

⁶⁵ *Proceedings of the Educational Convention* (1870), p. 216.

⁶⁶ *Baptists and the National Centenary*, p. 119.

⁶⁷ *Proceedings National Baptist Education Convention* (1872), p. 13.

⁶⁸ *Proceedings Western Baptist Education Commission*, p. 58.

⁶⁹ Newman, *op. cit.*, pp. 476-77.

pose of the latter organization, as expressed in the second article of the constitution, was "to secure a closer fellowship among the educational workers of the denomination, to increase the efficiency and prosperity of the institutions represented, and, in co-operation with other agencies, to promote a more general interest in education thruout the denomination."⁷⁰

The idea of the consolidation of administrative units was applied to various phases of denominational effort. Between 1865 and 1875, the independent Baptist state Sunday-school associations became affiliated with the state conventions, and, through the agency of the American Baptist Publication Society, the Sunday-school work was organized on a national basis. The "national anniversaries" of the mission, education, and publication societies became more truly representative, for they were no longer held exclusively in the East, but Chicago, Cincinnati, Denver, St. Louis, and San Francisco were selected as convention centers.⁷¹ When the national societies were formed, provisions were made for life-memberships on the basis of the contribution of a stipulated sum to the treasury of the society. A board of managers living in or near some large eastern center, such as New York, was the executive agency, and there was no provision for proportional representation from individual churches or district associations. Advocates of a more democratic form of representation fought long and hard, but it was not until 1872 that the Missionary Union capitulated by providing for the appointment annually of seven delegates from each state convention and additional delegates to the number of 1 for every 4,000 members of the Baptist churches of any such state.⁷²

A further step toward uniformity and equality of representation was taken in 1889. In that year all four of the national societies of Baptists instructed their executive boards to have

⁷⁰ *Baptist Educational Union*, p. 3.

⁷¹ In 1867, Chicago; 1878, Cleveland; 1884, Detroit; 1887, Minneapolis; 1891, Cincinnati; 1893, Denver; 1899, San Francisco.

⁷² *Proceedings* (1872), p. viii.

a portion of the hall in which the sessions were to be held reserved for the delegates and other voting members, and to send to every church a request for delegates, together with a statement of the condition of delegation, and blanks on which to return by a specified date the names of delegates and life-members to be present from that church. The local entertainment committee provided tickets for regularly appointed delegates, and none but ticket-holders were allowed in the reserved sections. The national conventions were now no longer merely "mass meetings," as the delegates were responsible to the local churches or district associations from whence they had come. In churches all over the land, there had "begun to be felt the throb of the whole body."⁷³

The rapid growth of cities that came with the commercial and industrial exploitation of the Middle West forced upon Baptists difficult problems of adjustment in methodology and physical equipment. The trend of the population from the open country to urban centers is an important phase of American development since the Civil War. In 1860, 15 per cent of the national population resided in cities above 10,000 inhabitants, but in 1900, 34 per cent of the population resided in such cities.⁷⁴ Nearly every important city in the Middle West, with the exception of Cincinnati, more than doubled in population during the decade 1850-60, and many continued to increase by over 100 per cent in each of the succeeding decades to 1900.⁷⁵ Consider the amazing growth of Chicago, which had 29,963 inhabitants in 1850, 109,260 in 1860, 298,977 in 1870, 503,185 in 1880, 1,099,985 in 1890, and 1,698,575 in 1900.

The larger cities of the Middle West grew so quickly that Protestant Christianity was unable to expand its program rapidly enough. A first reaction was the futile effort to stem the tide by calling the trend an unfavorable symptom of the times

⁷³ "Votes and Seats at the May Meetings," *Standard*, April 3, 1890.

⁷⁴ S. A. Reeve, *Modern Economic Tendencies*, p. 362.

⁷⁵ *Statistical Abstract of the United States* (1916), pp. 52-53.

and pleading that happiness was "far more prevalent in the country than in the town."⁷⁶ A Baptist editor went so far as to call cities "partly a punishment of man's sin, and partly a blunder of man's ignorance of what is best for himself," while admitting that they were "in part, a fruit of the necessity of society, trade and government."⁷⁷ Baptists soon abandoned this defeatist philosophy and turned to the active conquest of the growing cities.

Even before the war the stronger individual churches in Chicago, Cincinnati, and St. Louis began to establish mission stations. The Shields Mission was started by the First Baptist Church of Chicago in 1856, and in 1859 the North Star Mission was founded in a German-speaking area by a group of young men from the same church. Within ten years the North Star Mission had a Sunday-school enrolment of 1,000, an industrial school for girls with 200 scholars, a reading-room, a monthly paper, and a full schedule of "sociables" and prayer meetings in the German language.⁷⁸ By 1870 work was being done among the Welsh, the Swedes, the Danes, and the Germans, and there were missions at the stock yards, the Union Glass Works, the rolling mills, and the Bridgeport Iron works, all financed and officered by the First Baptist Church. A report of 1869 showed that this church had a total of 3,165 Sunday-school scholars, 1,100 of whom met in the mother-church.⁷⁹

The expansion of the home-mission program in the larger cities would be well worth a detailed study, but there is space here only to note that, as new social forces developed in the cities and came to be understood, programs, both secular and ecclesiastical, were shaped to meet them. By 1884 there were at least five distinct types of city mission, including the "arm" of a well-established church, the independent mission backed by a wealthy individual, the neighborhood church, the social

⁷⁶ *Christian Times and Witness*, January 5, 1858.

⁷⁷ "City and Country," *Standard*, January 16, 1868.

⁷⁸ "Chicago Items," *ibid.*, January 21, 1869.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, September 22, 1870.

center of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union or the Young Men's Christian Association, and regular denominational missions.⁸⁰

The demands for the development of the denominational program to meet the needs of such a rapidly growing city as Chicago were too immediate and too complex to be solved by individual churches, no matter how powerful. On November 11, 1857, an advisory council of all the Chicago Baptist churches met to take steps toward the founding of a church on the North Side of Chicago, where 25,000 people resided and there was no Baptist church.⁸¹ The movement proved to be premature, however, and it was not until 1872 that the Chicago Baptist Union was formed, and a co-operative home mission program under a paid secretary was inaugurated; ten years later the Baptist City Mission Society took over the work of the Union and further systematized it. A committee of fifteen was appointed whose duty it was to examine needy fields and "take steps to organize missions where the fields appear ready to harvest."⁸² In 1889, the Chicago Social Union, an organization of laymen, took over the City Mission Society and gave it a sounder financial backing, and Baptist churches in other western cities pooled their resources to advance the denominational cause. A Union for Church Extension was formed in St. Louis and \$15,000 contributed to church growth in a single year.⁸³ The Baptist churches of Detroit, six in number, including French, German, and colored, held a series of union meetings for three weeks with "most encouraging results."⁸⁴

The Social Union movement, the beginnings of which have already been sketched, brought together Baptist laymen in the large cities and proved a great boon to city missions.

Baptist leaders were conscious that great social changes

⁸⁰ "A Study of City Missions," *ibid.*, June 5, 1884.

⁸¹ "Chicago Items," *Christian Times and Witness*, November 11, 1857.

⁸² "City Evangelization," February 23, 1893.

⁸³ "St. Louis Letter," *Standard*, March 23, 1871.

⁸⁴ "A Precious Work in Detroit," March 16, 1871.

were taking place in the cities, so sermon topics dealing with the problems of the urban community became increasingly popular during the closing decades of the nineteenth century. W. W. Everts, who held a number of metropolitan pastorates, wrote a series of pamphlets on "Problems of the City" with such suggestive titles as "Temptations of City Life," "Social Position and Influence of Aggregated Populations," "Principles and Frauds of Commerce," and "Responsibilities of Service: or Employees and Employed."

The physical equipment of city churches was adapted to the needs of the new environment. Baptists had come west with fixed ideas as to the proper mode of worship. They were committed to a simple unliturgical New Testament service in an unpretentious church edifice, and baptisms were usually performed in a convenient river. However, such primitive simplicity had to give way to the demands of the new age. Even before the war, Francis Wayland vainly complained that all the city churches had organs and paid singers, and the "performers" were not infrequently the very persons who amused "the theatre on the evenings of the week, and the church of God on the Sabbath."⁸⁵ Another charge was that city pastors were ambitious to build up large churches and be known as men of broad, liberal, and catholic views.

City Baptists erected "Gothic temples" such as the First Baptist Church of Chicago, which was built in 1866 at a cost of \$175,000. It had an ornate baptistry with separate dressing-rooms for men and women, and, according to a church reporter, the large window in front was glazed with a very rich stained glass, superior to anything yet seen in the city.⁸⁶ An editorial writer for the same paper defended the expenditure of \$36,000 for a lot and \$8,500 for chimes by the Michigan Avenue Baptist Church by pleading that "in a region of wealth and fine houses, you must have a fine church."⁸⁷ Baptists in other cities

⁸⁵ *Notes on Baptist Practices* (1857), p. 151.

⁸⁶ "Chicago Items," *Christian Times and Witness*, March 22, 1866.

⁸⁷ *Standard*, April 20, 1871.

felt the need for physical bigness. The St. Paul Baptist Church, in 1872, purchased a square block of ground for a meeting-house at a cost of \$50,000, and the smaller cities in the middle western states erected structures costing from \$15,000 to \$50,000. There had come to be fundamental differences between urban and rural Christianity, and evangelization efforts were concentrated in the cities under the plea of securing first the important points. The caption of an editorial in the *Standard*, "Thousands for the Cities and Pennies for the Country," was literally true.⁸

In attempting to estimate the influence of contemporary trends in business and industry on religion, it must be borne in mind that many changes in Baptist polity were gradual in character, and their beginnings go far back of the period under consideration. Then, too, numerical growth alone would have forced a revision of the technique that served during the Colonial and early national epochs. Even so, there is reason to believe that the Baptist program was affected by the centralization of commercial and industrial units and the emphasis on efficiency of administration that characterized American development in the so-called age of big business that followed the Civil War.

⁸ *Ibid.*, January 27, 1876.

